

CT Family Resource Alliance

---

Appropriations Committee

On

February 11, 2009

Testimony By,

Michelle M. Anderson, President of CT Family Resource Alliance/FRC Coordinator  
Family Resource Center at Vogel-Wetmore School  
68 Church Street  
Torrington, CT 06790

My name is Michelle M. Anderson; I am the Coordinator of the Family Resource Center at Vogel-Wetmore School in Torrington. I am also the President of the CT Family Resource Alliance, which consists of representatives from 62 statewide Family Resource Centers. The CT Family Resource Alliance works to promote and strengthen state funded Family Resource Centers (FRCs) located in 39 school districts throughout the state. The vision guiding FRCs include helping children enter Kindergarten eager to learn, helping to close the achievement gap, and strengthening families through family support and parent education. The Family Resource Alliance, is also a member of the Early Childhood Alliance, a statewide coalition of early childhood organizations, providers, parents and advocates. *Together with the Early Childhood Alliance, we wish to express our appreciation for the efforts made to protect core early childhood programs in the Governor's proposed budget for 2009-2111.*

The Family Resource Centers are the doorways to our schools for many families in our state. All FRCs implement a 7 component program that increases parental involvement in their child's education beginning at birth; and strengthens the family-school-community connection to ensure that all children are ready to learn when they enter school. FRCs serve all families making it a cost-effective effort in CT elementary schools. Our seven components include: Full-Time Preschool /Child Care, School-Age Child Care, Families In Training/Parents As Teachers, Adult Education, Support and Training for Family Day Care Providers, Positive Youth Development, and Resource and Referral.

While we as service providers see the value of the work we do every day, we recognize the need to evaluate of our efforts to ensure their impact and accountability. Currently, the following efforts are underway to evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of the FRCs:

- Yale University is currently undergoing an intensive evaluation study funded by the CT General Assembly. The goals of this evaluation are to describe the scope and quality of services, identify the impact of FRCs on families, school, and the community, and enhance the capacity of FRC staff to collect and utilize data to inform program development. Charter Oak is working closely with Yale to ensure that the Results Based Accountability (RBA) process is imbedded within this evaluation. Evaluation results are expected in May 2009.

- The State Department of Education is conducting their own RBA pilot studies to evaluate and assess the impact of the Parents As Teachers/Families-In-Training component of our program.
- Other studies and evaluations in the past have included the Parents As Teachers University of Idaho Study and an independent study conducted by the University of Massachusetts.

*(Evaluation results provided upon request)*

- In addition, some FRCs link with local adult education and after school programs through direct services and/or collaborations. The FRCs benefit from the sharing of data and the use of after school and adult education data systems to collect and track data.

Like many state programs, Family Resource Centers have endured our share of budget cuts over the years. We know tough times are here and will be here for the upcoming years. Family Resource Centers do so much on a *shoe string budget* for schools, communities and families across Connecticut. We are a vehicle for increasing parent involvement within our schools. Research tells us that when parents are involved in their students' education children do better in school. Truly "No Child Left Behind" begins at the Family Resource Center. The need for families using our support services has never been greater. We are already seeing a demand in the use of our adult education programming, childcare offerings, preschool slots, and weekly early learning groups and home visiting programs. . *We urge this committee to support and maintain our core services as noted in the Governor's proposed budget for 2009-2011.*

Thank you.